United Nations S/PRST/2004/20

Security Council

Distr.: General
18 June 2004

Original: English

Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 4992nd meeting of the Security Council, held on 18 June 2004, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Guinea-Bissau", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council, recalling its previous statements on Guinea-Bissau, in particular the Statement of its President of 19 June 2003 (S/PRST/2003/8), welcomes the report of the Secretary-General dated 4 June 2004 (S/2004/456) on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on activities of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in that country (UNOGBIS).

"In this regard, the Council expresses its satisfaction regarding progress made by national authorities towards restoring constitutional order, in accordance with the Transition Charter provisions and calendar, in particular the installation of a new National Popular Assembly and a new Government, thus completing the first phase of the transitional process due to end with the holding of presidential elections by March 2005, and generating the environment for growing international confidence and support.

"The Security Council acknowledges, with appreciation, the manner in which the country's principal actors and the political forces managed to reach consensus on critical political challenges they faced during and after the elections and encourages them to stay the course.

"The Security Council also encourages all parties, and the new government established on 12 May 2004, to faithfully adhere to the provisions of the Transition Charter in order to achieve and consolidate national reconciliation and to ensure the full restoration of constitutional order. It further encourages the authorities to continue to strengthen the rule of law and respect for human rights and to resolve outstanding human rights issues.

"The Security Council commends the national authorities and the people of Guinea-Bissau for their continued commitment and dedication to democracy.

"The Security Council expresses, nonetheless, its concern with the fragility of the democratization process in Guinea-Bissau, due mainly to the country's deep-rooted structural problems, including the weakness of State institutions and structures, as well as persistent economic and social crisis.

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"The Security Council further expresses its concern about the need to improve the situation of the military, in particular the payment of salary arrears, which continues to be seen as a potentially destabilizing factor. It welcomes the Government's commitment to make all efforts aimed at addressing the issue of salary arrears and the reorganization of the national armed forces and invites the international community to fully support such efforts.

"The Security Council welcomes the improved dialogue between the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the Bretton Woods institutions and urges the Government to continue to implement its commitments in the areas of fiscal responsibility and good governance. It highlights the importance that those efforts be matched by the resumption of adequate levels of international assistance.

"The Security Council acknowledges and also welcomes the assistance provided to Guinea-Bissau by bilateral and multilateral partners, in particular the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, and encourages their enhanced constructive involvement in the country.

"The Security Council underlines the importance it attaches to the organization of a round table conference to take place in the last quarter of this year, which it considers of utmost relevance to addressing some of the most urgent needs of Guinea-Bissau. In the interim, the Council reiterates its appeals to the international community to contribute financially to the Emergency Economic Management Fund for Guinea-Bissau, managed by the UNDP.

"The Security Council recognizes and commends the work of UNOGBIS and the entire United Nations country team for their outstanding support and contribution to the process of normalization of the political situation and stability in Guinea-Bissau.

"The Security Council reaffirms the importance of the regional dimension in the solution of the problems faced by Guinea-Bissau and, in this regard, welcomes the role being played by the African Union, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) in the peace-building process in Guinea-Bissau.

"The Security Council also commends the efforts by the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa of the Security Council, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau of the Economic and Social Council and the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau aimed at assisting the country to address both its short-term post-conflict crisis and longer-term development goals.

"The Security Council looks forward to conclusions and recommendations of its mission to West Africa, which includes Guinea-Bissau."